



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Soldier Missing From WWII Accounted For

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing since World War II, have been identified and are being returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

Army Pfc. Cecil E. Harris, 19, of Shelbyville, Tenn., will have a funeral Aug. 29, in Chattanooga, Tenn., and will be buried Oct. 22, in Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C. On Jan. 2, 1945, Harris and elements of the Company D, 179th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division were deployed to France. Harris was a member of the rifle platoon, whose mission was to hold a defensive position, near Dambach, France. During this mission, Harris' platoon was attacked by German forces and was forced to withdraw to a more defensible position. After the attack, Harris was reported missing.

Between January 12 and May 20, 1949, the American Graves Registration Command (AGRC) conducted investigations on the loss of Harris, but were unsuccessful in locating his remains.

On Sept. 3, 2013, the American Battlefield Monuments Commission (ABMC) contacted the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) to inform them a private citizen, while hiking near Dambach, found possible human remains and an identification tag with Harris' name. French authorities took possession of the remains.

From Sept. 9-11, 2013, a JPAC recovery team excavated a burial site in Dambach recovering possible human remains, personal effects, and military gear that correlated to Harris.

To identify Harris' remains, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used forensic identification tools such as dental comparison with his records and mitochondrial DNA, which matched Harris' sister and niece.

Of the 16 million Americans who served in World War II, more than 400,000 died. Today, more than 73,000 are unaccounted for from the conflict.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for Americans, who went missing while serving our country, visit the DPMO web site at www.dtic.mil/dpmo or call (703) 699-1169.

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